

B-4471

DRUID HILL POWERHOUSE OF THE BALTIMORE TRACTION COMPANY
BALTIMORE CITY, MD

This is a very impressive Romanesque Revival structure built in 1890 to function as a cable car power house. It has picturesque massing and a fortress-like character. It employs a rusticated stone, battered foundation, dark red brick walls, and light stone trim. There are oversized pedimented dormers with Queen Anne sash. The roofline of the Francis Street elevation is stepped. This is currently a commercial warehouse; access restricted.

Burned
1/14/2005

D INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES FORM
SANDTOWN-WINCHESTER SURVEY

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name Druid Hill Powerhouse of the Baltimore Traction Co.

other names/site number warehouse/ B-4471

2. Location

street & number 2480 Druid Hill Ave.

not for publication

city or town Baltimore

vicinity N/A

state Maryland

code MD

county

Baltimore City

code 510

zip code 21217

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

N/A

4. National Park Service Certification

N/A

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

Noncontributing

1	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
1	_____ Total

SDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

(Druid Hill Powerhouse of the Baltimore Traction Co.)
(Baltimore City, MD)

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Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/
EXTRACTION

Sub: enerby facility

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE/TRADE

Sub: warehouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Romanesque

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: sandstone

roof ASPHALT/ASBESTOS?

walls BRICK

other STONE: limestone, sandstone

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance See continuation sheet.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Industry
Architecture

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(Baltimore City, MD)

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Period of Significance 1890-1940

Significant Dates 1890
1896

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Maps

Bromley, G.W. and Co. Atlas of the City of Baltimore, Vol. 1. Philadelphia: 1885, 1896.

Hopkins, G.M. Map of the City of Baltimore, Maryland. 1876, 1877.

Sanborn Map Company. Insurance Maps, Baltimore, Maryland, Vols. 2,3, and 7. New York: 1890, 1901, 1914, 1928.

Simmons, Isaac. 1852 Revision of the Thomas H. Poppleton Map. Baltimore: 1852.

Farrell, Michael R. Who made All Our Streetcars Go? Baltimore National Railway Historical Society Publications, 1973.

Records of the Baltimore Streetcar Museum

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Lot = 206' x 254' 8"

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UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 — — — 3 — — —
2 — — — 4 — — —

— See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Block 3413, Lot 35

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries are based on a city lot(s) retaining original property lines.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Jo Lampl & Kay Fanning/Architectural Historians
organization Robinson & Associates date July 1992
street & number 1710 Connecticut Ave., NW telephone (202) 234-2333
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20009

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Stevenson Engineering
street&number 1600 Union Ave. telephone
city or town Baltimore state MD zip code 21211

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 5 & 6 Page 1

Druid Hill Powerhouse of the
Baltimore Traction Co.
name of property
Baltimore City, Maryland
county and State

HISTORIC CONTEXT

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period(s): Industrial/Urban Dominance

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Transportation; Architecture,
Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning

Resource Type:

Category: building(s)

Historic Environment: urban

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): transportation

Known Design Source: none

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Druid Hill Powerhouse of the
Baltimore Traction Co.
name of property
Baltimore City, Maryland
county and State

DESCRIPTION

This industrial building, built in 1890, was designed in a powerful, robust Romanesque Revival style with picturesque massing and a fortress-like character. It is similar to the work of Philadelphia architect Frank Furness in its ornamentation, free adaptation of historical forms, and jarring juxtapositions of scale. Its heavy stone forms, and oversized arches also recall the work of Henry Hobson Richardson. It is clearly one of the most architecturally distinguished buildings in the survey area.

The Druid Hill Avenue pedestrian entrance is set in a two-story projecting gabled bay. This elevation consists of a taller block than the rest of the building, its top floor treated in corner towers (of one and two stories in height) with finials. Long windows on the first floor are matched by oversized dormers in many of the bays. The Retreat Street elevation carries the architectural vocabulary of Druid Hill Avenue around the corner. The Francis Street elevation, on the other hand, has a much more planar surface and features a stepped parapet.

The southern end of the building features a one-story space which spans the length of the building. On the east, this section contains the large openings which provided access for the streetcar (see attached historical photograph). Inscribed above the primary bay in stone is the company which erected the structure, "The Baltimore Traction Company." At the western end of this section, the building takes on a simple one-story shop-like character, and has a monitor roof.

The entire building is covered in a series of cross-gabled roofs, which were originally clad in clay tile. Despite the building's immense scale, much of it is actually one story in height, with tall gables and pedimented dormers punctuating the roofline and making the building seem much taller. The brick structure stands on a rusticated, battered stone foundation, and has a great variety of ornamentation in molded brick and different types of stone. At the cornice level, a combination of decorative accents, including corbelled brick, a repeating series of brick panels, and a stone band carved in depressed circles, forms a wide band around the building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

Druid Hill Powerhouse of the
Baltimore Traction Co.**name of property**

Baltimore City, Maryland

county and State

Most windows have rusticated stone lintels; the first-floor openings in the primary entrance bay on the Druid Hill Avenue elevation have large arches. Other first-floor windows are tall, narrow, flat-headed features with transoms (now infilled with brick). The Francis Street elevation has segmental-arched openings on the first floor, and round-arched openings above. The matching lintels of both the first-floor windows and their transoms above form rough-faced beltcourses which encircle the two major elevations. The pediments of the dormer windows are highly unusual, and feature the original multi-paned leaded, opaque glass. This same type of glass originally filled in the transoms of the first-floor windows and the upper sash of the Druid Hill Avenue gable.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 1

Druid Hill Powerhouse of the
Baltimore Traction Co.
name of property
Baltimore City, Maryland
county and StateSIGNIFICANCE

This combination power house/car barn was built in 1890 by the Baltimore Traction Company and signifies the innovative, albeit short-lived use of cable cars in Baltimore.

The Baltimore Traction Company was formed in 1889 as a merger of Citizens and People's Railways. Founded by a prominent banker, Edward Hambleton, the company had a rich foundation and could afford to expand rapidly. At the time of the company's incorporation, the preferred, or "leading-edge" technology was electric power, and thus the company sought permission to become an electric enterprise. City officials, however, were wary of the dangers of overhead wires, and denied the company's request. Thus, Baltimore Traction began as a cable car operation. It began its business by laying cable along the former horsecar lines to Druid Hill and Patterson Parks.

The power house/car barn for the Druid Hill Park operation was constructed in 1890 on Druid Hill Avenue, simultaneously with the laying of the track along the street. The company's two original power houses--the one on Druid Hill and one on Pratt Street at Central--were designed to galvanize steam power to move the heavy steel ropes which ran through conduits laid in the center of the street beds.

The Druid Hill Car Barn was a massive structure--210 feet long and 260 feet deep. Cable cars entered the structure through a main door on Druid Hill Avenue onto a "transfer table" which ran the width of the building (see attached). A 1900 floor plan of the building when it was owned by the United Railways & Electric Company reveals a three-part composition to the interior: a northern portion devoted to the power house, a southern portion taken up by tracks and maintenance pits; and an eastern portion composed of the transfer table. (See attached.)

Two years after the Druid Hill Power House was in place, the company's success with the Druid Hill Avenue line spurred their laying of a second route to Druid Hill Park--via Fayette and Gilmor Streets. In order to

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PS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 2

Druid Hill Powerhouse of the
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name of property
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provide power for the cable, the company purchased the Epworth Methodist Church at Gilmor and Mosher (in Sandtown) and, in an early adaptive use venture, converted it to a power house. This church/power house served the Gilmor Street line beginning in August 1892.

One year later, in 1893, the Baltimore Traction Company received approval to convert its tracks to electric power. The Carey Street and Fremont Street lines were converted that year, and the Gilmor Street line in 1895.

Only six years after its opening as a cable-car power house, the Druid Hill Avenue power house/car barn was converted to an electric generating plant.

Only two of the three Baltimore Traction Company power houses still stand; this one on Druid Hill and the other on Pratt Street. The church ultimately suffered a fire in 1976 while in its second reincarnation as the Regal Laundry.

SANDTOWN-WINCHESTER/PENN-NORTH
RECONNAISSANCE-LEVEL SURVEY FORM

Survey No. B-4471

Neg. No. 7/3,10

Historic Name Druid Hill Powerhouse of the Baltimore Traction Co.

Current Name/Use warehouse

Address(es) 2480 Druid Hill Avenue

Resource/Property Type

☐ Attached

☒ Freestanding

☐ Rowhouses
☐ Commercial Structure
☐ Public/Institutional Building
☐ Public Housing
☐ Site
☒ Other

Note: transportational structure

Stories 2

Primary Material brick Secondary Material brownstone, limestone

Roof Form gable

No. of Bays in Unit/Facade 13 If Rowhouse: ☐ Flat Front ☐ Swell Front ☐ Porch

Window Type: ☒ Double-Hung
☐ 1/1 Sash
☐ 2/2 Sash
☐ 2/1 Sash
☒ Other Sash
☒ Transom

Door Type: ☐ Single-Leaf
☐ Double-Leaf
☐ Number of panels (if visible)
☐ Transom

Architectural Style Romanesque Revival Date c. 1852-90

Noteworthy Features: Picturesque massing and fortress-like character. Gabled entrance with finials; Retreat St. elevation terminates in corner towers. Large pedimented dormers. Francis St. elevation has stepped parapet. Rusticated coursed ashlar stone foundations. Windows have arches, segmental arches, and rusticated stone lintels. Beltcourses of corbelled, patterned brickwork and decorative stone.

Alterations: ☐ Formstone ☐ Stucco
☐ Vinyl/Aluminum ☒ Window/Door Changes
☐ Awnings ☐ Missing Cornice Elements
☒ First-Floor Use Change ☐ Other: _____

Status: ☒ Occupied ☐ Vacant ☐ Mixed

NR Evaluation: ☒ Contributing ☐ Non-Contributing
Recommended for Intensive Level: ☒ Yes ☐ No

Surveyor: Joey Lampl
Date: February-April 1992

Affiliation: Robinson & Associates

STREET

SALEM U.B. CHURCH
38'10" CHURCH.

B-4471
Druid Hill Powerhouse of the Baltimore Traction Co.
Baltimore, MD
Sanborn Map, 1890

1

FLORENCE

TEMPORARY

STREET

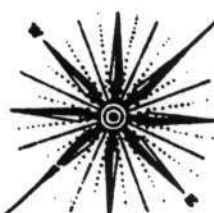
FRANCIS

TENSION ROOM
MACHINE ROOM
ENGINE REELS &.

DRUID HILL AVE POWER HO.
OF THE
BALTIMORE TRACTION CO.

CAR HOUSE

CONSTANT WATCHMAN - HEAT & POWER STATION.
FUEL COKE - LIGHTS GAS
CITY WATER - 12 3/4" & 20" PIPES
IRON CHAINS - ALL STONE & CEMENT FLOORS
EXCEPT IN MACHINE ROOM.

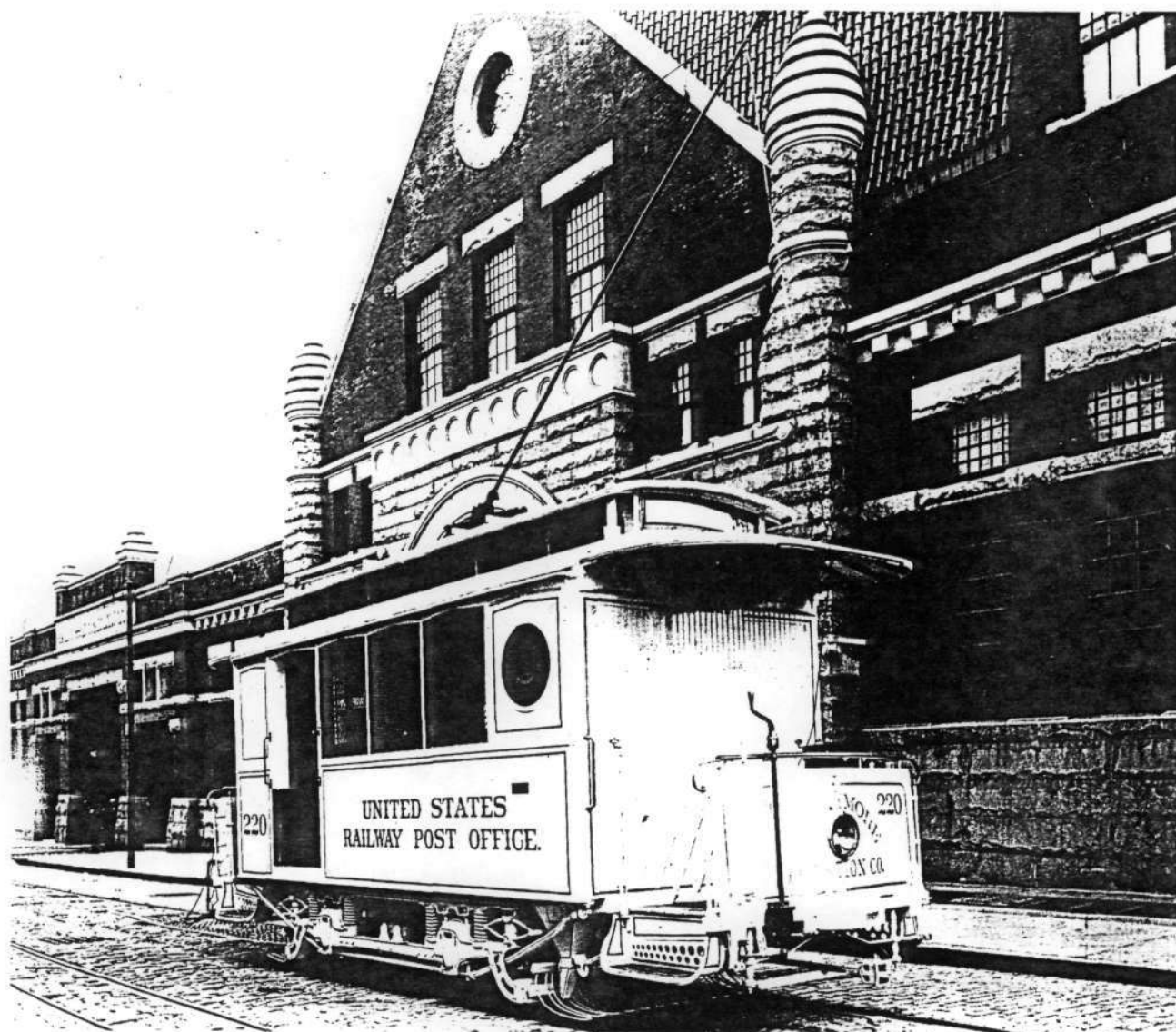


Scale of Feet.

119

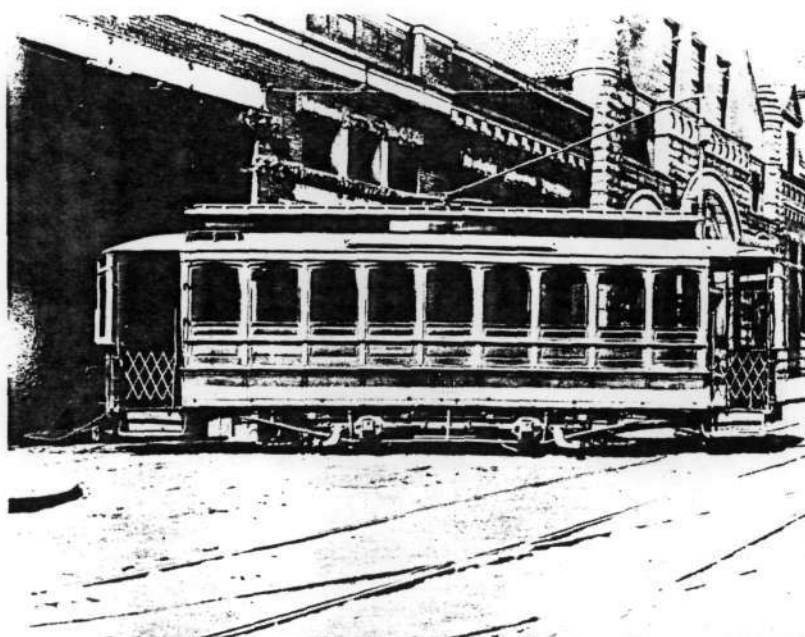


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Druid Hill Powerhouse of the Baltimore Traction Co.
Baltimore, MD
Baltimore West Quadrangle



Baltimore Traction's Druid Hill Ave. cable power plant and attached car house are only a half dozen years old here, but already electric power has replaced the rope. Mail car served until 1929; the buildings still remain and are but little changed outwardly.
(L. C. Mueller collection)

Farrell, Michael. Who Made All Our Streetcars Go? Baltimore NRHS Publications, 1973.



Brill 1898 convertible with windows installed for winter service. In the warmer months, only thin white posts and metal bars remained in place. #2117 is about to enter Traction Company's ex-cable barn, which required little alteration to handle electric cars. (L. C. Mueller collection)

Farrell, Michael. Who Made All Our Streetcars Go? Baltimore NRHS Publications, 1973.

FRANCIS ST.

RETREAT ST.

ST.



THE UNITED RAILWAYS & ELECTRIC CO.

PLAN OF CAR BARN ON

DRUID HILL AVE. NEAR RETREAT ST.

SCALE 1"=30' - Nov. 1900

DEEDS NOS 8, 9, 10

United Railways & Electric Company, Plan of Car Barn on Druid Hill Avenue near Retreat Street, 1900 (Baltimore Streetcar Museum)

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SANDTOWN - WINCHESTER / PENN-NORTH

#B-4471

BALTIMORE, MD

ELIZABETH JO LAMPL

MARCH 1992

CITY OF BALTIMORE, COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

HISTORIC: DRUID HILL POWER HOUSE OF THE BALTIMORE TRACTION CO.

CURRENT: WAREHOUSE - 2480 DRUID HILL AVENUE

VIEW FACING SOUTH

ROLL 7 / NEG 10

1 of 4



SANDTOWN-WINCHESTER / PENN-NORTH

#B-4471

BALTIMORE, MD

ELIZABETH G. LAMPL

MARCH 1992

COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION (CITY OF BALTIMORE)

HISTORIC: DROID HILL POWER HOUSE OF THE BALTIMORE TRACTION CO.

CURRENT: WAREHOUSE - 2480 Droid Hill Avenue

VIEW FACING SOUTHEAST

ROLL 7 / NEG 3

2 of 4



Sandtown-Windchester/Penn-North

B-4471

Baltimore, MD

Leonard Jackson

July 1992

City of Baltimore, Commission for Historical
and Architectural Preservation

Historic: Druid Hill Powerhouse of the
Baltimore Traction Co.

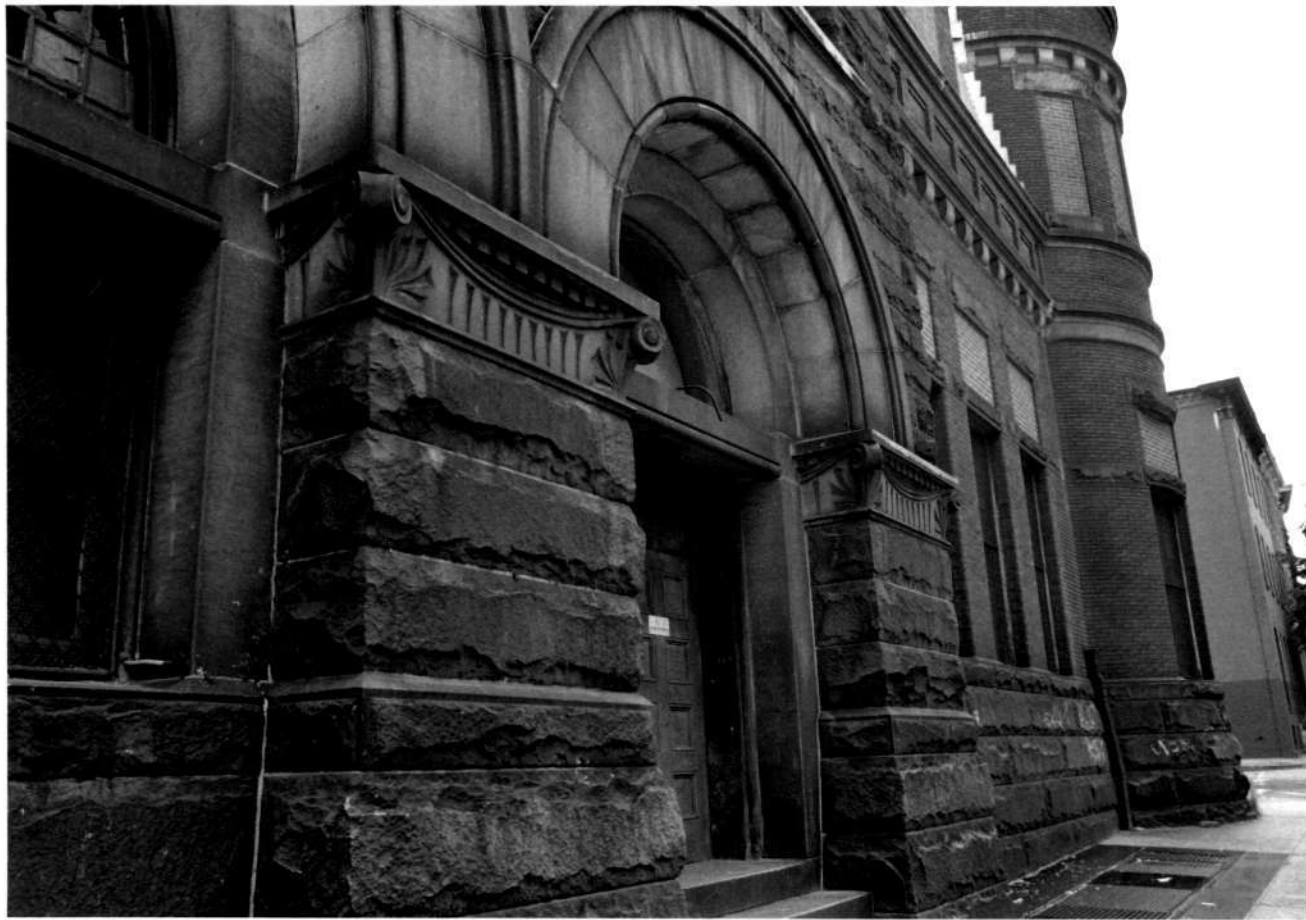
Current: Warehouse

2480 Druid Hill Avenue

DETAIL, DRUID HILL AVE. ENTRANCE

Roll 9/Neg 25

3 of 4



Sandtown - Winchester / Penn - North
#B-4471
Baltimore, MD

Leonard Jackson
July 1992

City of Baltimore, Commission for Historical and Architectural
Preservation

Historic: Druid Hill Powerhouse of the Baltimore Traction Co.
Current: Warehouse

2480 Druid Hill Avenue
DETAIL, DRUID HILL AVE. ENTRANCE

Roll 11 / neg 27

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